

A
Q V Æ R E,
CONCERNING THE
CHVRCH-COVENANT,
PRACTISED IN THE
SEPARATE CONGREGATIONS.

Sent with a Letter thereunto annexed,
• from *J. G.* to *T. G.*

Wherein is proved that there is much evill and manifold inconveniences in the exacting and urging such a Covenant.

Imprimatur, Ja. Cranford



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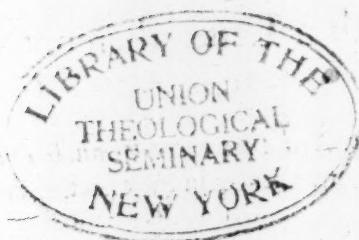
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A

Quære concerning the Church-Covenant, practised IN THE SEPARATE CONGREGATION

By what warrant of Scripture or otherwise, can any Church of Christ impose any such expresse and formall covenant upon those that desire membership with them, as a peremptory condition of their admittance, as is now generally practised in all your Churches; We conceive the Scripture nowhere justifieth these proceedings, but rather judge there is much evill, and manifold inconveniences in the exalting and urging such a covenant.

Barnard Apri 10, 1619 47.



FIRST, Onfident we are (as confidence it selfe can make us) that there is no Commandement given to the Churches for exacting any such Covenant of those that are to bee admitted into Church-fellowship with them, so that we conceive any such exactation to bee a meere humane invention, and a straine of that wisedome that desires not only to exalt it selfe above all that is practised by men, but above that which is written by God himselfe; yea, though instances &

examples could be produced of such Covenants both demanded and given, yet this may stand without any warrant of lawfulness, much more without the imposition of any necessity upon Churches at this day to make the like demand of their intended members; and most of all it may stand without any necessity lying upon Churches, to make the demand as of a duty of absolute necessity.

First, no example bindeth but by virtue, and in the strength of some commandement, & if there were any thing necessary to be done which is not commanded by God, then must there be found weakenesse & imperfection in his Law; therefore to make any thing necessary which the Law of God maketh not necessary, is not to keepe the Law, but (*as James faith*) to judge it.

Secondly, there be examples found of many things done by many Christians (yea by whole Churches) in the primitive times, not onely lawfully but with high and speciall approbation, the doing whereof in these times is not onely no wayes necessary, but lyable to much question, whether lawfull or convenient. The selling of lands and houses, by those that were the possessors of them, and bringing and laying downe the money at the Apostles feet, was practised (we know) in the Apostles times, *Act. 4.34.35.* And *as Tertullian witnesseth, committed 200. yeeres together in the Church.* But I know no man now that pleads for the necessity of any such practise, yea whether it would not bee much inexpedient for the Gospell, (and consequently in some degrees unlawfull) if now put in practice, a few thoughts would sufficiently discover.

Thirdly, and lastly, There is no question to be made, but that many times the diversification of circumstances, and aspects of things in the world, and course of Gods providence, have not onely a lawfull power of dissolving the binding force and authority of many examples, but of suspending our obedience to many rules, precepts, and exhortations: as for example, that kinde of salutation betweene men mentioned, *Gen. 27.26. 1 Sam. 20.41.* and oft elsewhere, being generally left and out of use; those injunctions of *Paul, Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 20.* and elsewhere, Greet yea one another with an holy kisse, impose no such literality upon the Saints in these dayes as they did, when they were written; neither doe I conceive (nor I suppose you) that the Elders of the Church are now bound to annoint the sick with oyle, because this is commanaged, *James 5. 14.* neither doe I conceive

ceive that the French Churches lye under any guilt of sin, for suffering their teachers to have their heads covered in their publicke ministry notwithstanding that rule or direction of Paul, 1 Cor. 11. 4. Every man praying or preaching having any thing on his head, dishonoureth his head, because that topicall custome amongst the *Grecians*, upon which Paul built this rule or assertion, is wholly disused by their Nation, and the contrary generally practised amongst them. Though I doe not thinke this Scripture is to be restrained to the teacher only, but to concerne as well the whole Assembly of men present, who are all here said to pray or prophecy in a passive sense, (as women also are) that is, to partake of these ordinances with the teacher: Other like instances might be given. And doubtlesse the rule that Cameron gives, who was a man of as much learning, sharpenesse of wit, and happinesse in opening the Scriptures as any the reformed Churches in France, yea I may say in any part of the world have enjoyed of latter times, is most true. *There are many things commanded in Pauls Epistles, whereof there is no use at this day, (viz. as touching the literall and precise observation) as is that of prophecying, 1 Cor. 14. and concerning the habit of women prophecying, which belong not to our times; but concerning prophecying wee shall God willing move some speciall Quere's afterward.* And I verily beleieve, that one maine reason and grand occasion of all separation from us, (on that hand you are gone) is, because the words of the sacred text fitted to particular occasions, and to the condition of the times wherein they were written, are taken and applied by such men to themselves and others, as they find them, without due respect had to those weighty and materiall differences that are between one and the other: as might be demonstrated at large, (if it were any part of our present purpose.) In the meane time evident it is by what hath beene said, that though particular instances could be produced, wherein the Covenant so much magnified, so indispensably urged by your Churches (generally) upon their members before their particular admission, yea by some Masters of your way defended in writing as the *very forme and essence of a true Church*, (the writing here hath gone a long time under your owne name, but of late I heare you have disclaimed it) hath beene practised by former Churches and put upon those which desired:

desired membership with them, yet there is no sufficient ground to conclude a necessity now lying upon all Churches to doe the like, except there be a precept or command found for the doing of it, no nor yet to prove a lawfulnesse of doing it, except circumstances lye cleare and faire for the doing it, nay a precept or command it selfe will not evince a necessity hereof, if any master or grand circumstance be now changed or altered, upon which the precept was given: but yet notwithstanding I adde, in the Second place, neither doe the Scriptures afford *any instance or example*, wherein any such Covenant hath ever been demanded or exacted by any particular Church of those who desired fellowship with it: But *many instances* there are wherein *only upon a sober profession* of their faith in Christ and entertainment of the Gospell, men have beeene received into Churches *without the least noise or mention of any such Covenant.* Ad. 2.41. They that *gladly received his word were Baptized*, and the same day there were added unto [the Church] about three thousand soules: some of your judgements strongly conceite that they espy their Covenant in these words [were added;] but surely if they were assisted by the same imagination they might as soone discover it in those words, Gen. 1. In the beginning God made Heaven and Earth; for to any reasonable and diungaged apprehension, that word [were added] with the number of converts joyned with it, onely expresseth the exceeding great worke of God, in making so great an enlargement or addition to his Church in so short a time: and doubtlesse a man must get a dispensation for his understanding, to enable him to thinke or beleieve that within the compasse of halfe a day, or little more at the most, perhaps somewhat lesse, (for the former part of the day was well spent before P.ter began his Sermon, ver. 15. and how long he continued the Preaching is uncertain, it seemes he was not very briefe, ver. 40.) three thousand persons should particularly and distinctly one after another in the same place and before the same persons being examined and tryed, take a solemne Covenant repeating the Contents and words thereof; doubtlesse the art and method of such dispatch is utterly lost and perished at this day, either the Covenant they made was very briefe, and but an act to yours, or else the motion of their tongues in speaking was much swifter
then

then our thoughts: you must favour your selfe beyond al reason in both these suppositiones, or else suppose no longer your Covenant here. Besides evident it is, that these that were added to the Church, were baptized before; this is affirmed of them: Now being baptized, and that in an orderly and right way, as you will not deny, this did immediately qualifie them for Church fellowship according to your owne grounds, and the truth it selfe, therefore they needed not the mediation of a Covenant to make them capable hereof: so that you see an impossibility of any Covenant to be employed here. And if you be not relieved at this doore, there is little hopes to find more charity in this kind at others: *Philip* required no other Covenant or condition of the *Eanuic* to qualifie him for baytyme, and thereby to give him entrance into the Church, but onely to beleieve in the Lord Jesus with all his heart, and to professe it to him, *Act. 8. 37.* When *Saul* assayed to joyne himself with the Disciples at Hierusalem, *Act. 9. 26.* the reason why they declinid him for a time, was not because they tendered a Covenant to him and he refused it, but because they were all afraide of him and beleaved not that he was a Disciple; implying that had they beleaved this concerning him that he had beene a Disciple, a beleever, they would have received him without any more adoe; yea upon *Barnabas* his meere Testimony of him without any Covenant subscribed, confession made, or word spoken by himselfe, he was received, *vers. 27.28.* So againe *Act. 11. 24.* there is mention made of many that were added or joyned to the Lord, i. e. were immembred into the Church, but no more words of any such Covenant as you urge, then a *deafe man may heare*: If you peruse the passages of the New Testament further, you will espie many more Starres of the constellation, neither can you here have recourse to those Covenants mentioned in the Old Testament, *Ezra 10. 3. Nebem. 9.38.* to patterne you withall, for then you flee to a *Sanctuary which your selfe have polluted*, by destroying all sympathy and agreement betweene a nationall Church and that which you call instituted or particular: and besides to forsake the guidance of the Spirit of God under the New Testament, to seeke to make out our thoughts by the old, is to aske the

twilight

twilight in the Evening, whether it were light at noone day. Moreover if desire of brevity (for the present) did not binde my hands, it were easie to demonstrate unto you what a solemne disagreement there is many wayes betweene these Covenants and yours, and particularly in that precise circumstance which must have relieved you.

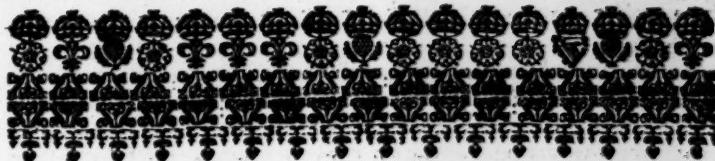
3. To me there is no imaginable use or necessity of this your Covenant, because believers, willing, or agreeing, to live together in the same body are bound by greater bonds a thousand fold then any Covenant they can make betweene themselves, to performe mutually all, and all manner of love, service and Christian duties whatsoever, *Christ himselfe is the greatest of bands,* and of all manner of obligements or iengagements whatsoever both to knit and hold Christians together, and to make them of one heart and of one Soule, and to keepe them so : by whom (by Christ) *all the body being coupled and knit together by every joint, &c. Ephes.4.16.* And where the Scripture speakes of other bands with him and besides him, (yet all relating to him) in-dearing and binding Christians together as close as ever their hearts and soules will packe or worke into one, amongst them all your Covenant commeth not into any mention or remembrance, There is one body, one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your vocation, There is one Lord, one faith, one baptisme, one God and Father of all; surely if they had beene joyned and joyned together by any such Covenant as you speake of, and this Covenant beene of divine justification, and of that high and Soveraigne consequence as to give them their very life, being and subsistence as a Church or body, the Apostle could not have so farre forgot himselfe as not to have inventoried it amongst its fellowes, especially there being no place (that I can readily call to mind) more commodious throughout all his writings to have made a particular and an expresse mention hereof then here: And for my part I freely and ingenuouly and in the simplicity of my heart professe unto you, that I neither know what further or greater duty or service of love in any kind I can desire or wish of those my brethren in Christ, upon whom the providence of God together with my owne voluntary election either hath or hereafter shall cast me in Church

Church-fellowship, then what they stand bound by the common band of our mutuall interest in the same God , in the same Lord, in the same baptisme, in the same faith, in the same hope,&c. to exhibe, tender, and performe unto mee without the expresse of any such covenant made with or unto me ; nor yet can I conceive how possibly I should have any better, richer or stronger assurance from them for the performance hereof unto me by the vertue or aide of any such covenant above what I have by the power of that grace and godlinesse which (as farre as I am able to judge) worketh effectually in them, and subjecteth them to all the said bands and obligations ; nor can I thinke that he whose strength to doe evill will serve to tramp'e under feet the blood of the Lord Christ, to cast the Commandements of the glorious God behind his backe to betray the hope of his owne peace and glory, will ever be kept in a Christian compasse towards me by any promise, band, or covenant of his owne, I know not how to thinke it a sinne in me not to defire or exact a greater securitie for my portion in the Saints then God himselfe hath given me, and established me in: I heare your answer bee, that your covenant respecteth as well every mans faithfulness towards God as discharge of dutie towards one another, and therefore in this regard (at leaft) there may be a necessarie of it. To this I make answer in few words ; First, why is not then the unnecessary part, at least of your Covenant (which I conceive is the greatest) *viz.* that which concerns the Covenanter's dutie towards his fellow struck off? Secondly, if such a Covenant as this, with or towards God bee so necessary a dutie, why is the place of it no where to be found amongst all the Commandements of God ? doubtlesse God requires it not at our hands, *to be either more provident or zealous for his glory then be is himselfe.* Thirdly and lastly, it is neither lawfull before baptisme, nor necessary after ; therefore the necessarie of it falls to the ground, and is not defensible ; that it is not lawfull before baptisme is evident, because it is not lawfull for a Church to receive the unbaptized into fellowship with them as members of that body, neither is there example or appearance of warrant in Scripture for such a thing. As evident it is that after baptisme it is altogether unnecessary, because baptisme doth immediately qualifie, for Church fellowship, (as hath beene sayd, your owne principles not gainesaying) and the Church it selfe, by admitting any to her baptisme, (*ipso facto*) admits into her fellowship and communion. Therefore I adde :

4. That the requiring and exacting of such a Covenant of men, and the

the imparting of Church fellowship upon it, I conceive it to be *an unchristian usurpation upon the consciences of men, and a tempting of God,* by laying such a burden upon his people, which he must give strength (more then otherwayes were necessary) to beare, or otherwise they must suffer (at least) (if not fall) under it; and I beleeve, I know some worthy every wayes of the honour (according to the line of men) who delirous of entrance into some of your Churches were turned back, by dislike of that new doore of your Covenant.

5. And lastly, We conceive the exacting and giving of such a Covenant is not onely a thing unnecessary ~~as is yergtis~~, as something above any thing that is written, but of worse inconvenience also, at least, as many of those that are ingaged in it, are wont to interpret and draw the importance hereof) for many looke upon a Covenant they have made with a particular Church as a partition wall wholly to separate them in care, affection, dependance, and from all other Churches and the Saints of God throughout the world, and take it for an authenticall discharge, and releafe from heaven from troubling themselves any wayes with the affaires of other Churches as ministering unto their necessities at any times. It was not much short of this which a great defender of your faith professed plainly unto me not long since, and that before some witnesse. *Calvin* well observes upon *Rom.16.16.* that *Pauls* study and desire was by his carefull remembrance and sending the mutuall salutations and greeting of one Church to another, *quantum in se est, mutuo amoris nexus devincire inter se omnia Christi membra:* As far as it lay in his power, to bind all members of Christ whatsoeuer in one and the same mutuall band of affection together. Now if *Paul* herein did the will and Commandement of God, (which I cannot thinke you will deny) then as your Saviour charged the Scribes and Pharisees, that they had made the Cominandement of God of none effect (they had taken a course to doe it, they had done that which directly tended thereunto) by their traditions, so (we conceive) we may justly chalenge your *Covenant* for an ill looke, or maligne aspect, upon that part of the will of God, wherein he desires that all believers, the world over should desire to maintaine a free intercourse of the dearest love and tenderest affections one towards another.



A
L E T T E R S E N T
From I. G. to T.G.

My deare Friend,



Hon I love and honour, if not enough, yet (certaine I am) very exceeding much in the Lord, I am sorry there being differences betweene us otherwise, that in this wee should so perfectly and so long agree, neither to send so much as a small peece of his minde to other for a love-token ; upon which of us the Law of love and Christian acquaintance rather imposed it, to have first appeared in breaking this agreement, the same Law prohibites to dispute. Whether it will ease the burthen on my part or no, I leave to your ingenuitie to consider and determine; but this I may truely say unto you, that I have had many thoughts from time to time since your departure from us, that have deereley longed after your bosome, and would hardly have beene kept from their longing till now, but by a strong hand of some indispensible occasions, and imployments otherwise ; And if my respects unto you did not command me to intreat you more gently in this behalfe, I might truely charge upon your selfe (in part) the occasion of my silence hitherto, your authority, grace, learning, parts, judgement & example, have made the stone of separation among us so masse and heavy that we are constrained to be at double paines and labour in removing and rolling it from the consciences of men. A great part

of our imployment is to stanch the issue of that fountaine of blood, which you (I presume in simplicity of heart for your part) have opened in the wombe of our Churches here; wee hoping againe your reunion with us and returne unto us, through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ *who is able to give you light to comprehend your darkenesse in those things lying yet under dispute betweene us,* are willing to save you what sorrow we can against the time of your retурne, and for this purpose endeavour our selves to make your mistakes as innocent as may be, and to keepe as many as we can from falling thereby. Deare brother that there were a heart in us to lay our heads together to finde out (if possible) some course that the *Sword may not alwayes thus devoure* doubtlesse there are waters to be found that will much asswage the heate, if not wholly quench the flames of these contentions and divisions. How greatly is it to be lamented that he by whom *God hath reconciled the world to himselfe, shold be made a meanes of dividing this reconciled world between themselves!* The heavens (I doubt not) will accord us, yet were it our greater comfort and glory if they might be prevented herein by the earth. I verily beleeve it would strike a great stroake in compromising this contention, if the *great men and chiese leaders* on both sides could be perswaded but to take fast hold upon this free and noble resolution, which yet I suppose we all intend to doe, *την ελεησθησιν και παντοιν την ιερωσιν, rather to do sacrifice to the truth then to be in bondage to suppositiones.* I know not how to open my mouth wide enough to shew you the enlargement of my heart unto you, if wee saw the truth clearly with you, *you shold not raigne alone,* wee would doubtlesse at once divide such a kingdome with you. Many indeed of your partie are ready to say in effect, that as it is heaven that separated you from us, so it is the world that separates us from you: But if you have the truth with you (which indeed if you have at least in many of your beloved Maximes, woe to my wits, reason and understanding; never poore man so strangely misused by such friends in this world) it would never bee a debtor to such interpretors or agents for it. As for the world, if it be as little on that side the Sea as it is on this, it will never be so much as a moate in your eye to hinder you from seeing any truth of God clearly. But as little as it is with us, we thinke it *too great and too good to be sacrificed upon the service of an error at any time.* Otherwise I doubt not but the Saints of God in England tread as light upon the earth, as you doe in Holland, and are as ready to buy the truth and give as good rates for it as the best Merchants among you, but howsoever I knew that

that this left-handed spirit rules much in men of your way, who *not* entent to make our standing naught, labour much to make us worse then our standings, yet I make no question but your anointing teacheth you better, and more Christian thoughts concerning us. And if wee judged it any advantage to the truth and cause we maintaine against you, wee durst view morall imputations with you, and are confident that wee could assigne and suggest against you both as many and as likely indirect and bleshly grounds for your departure from us as you can against us for keeping our firt standing and profession. But the truth will never be made great by such demonstrations or arguments as these on either side, *sometimes the truth is there where a man for many reasons would think there were least hope to find it,* and againe many times faire overtures, and many pleasing inducements will but deceive and disappoint men in this kind. And as for that kind of truth which wee inquire after and toyle in the fire of contention to find out, viz. spirituall and divine, there is no substantiall and satisfying meanes for the discovery of it, but by a holy, humble and unpartiall consultation with the oracles of God, yea if it be of that species or especiall kind of truth which is not spread (like the Mannah) upon the face of the Scriptures, but lyeth low amongst the deepe things of God, *1 Cor. 2. 10.* as it seemeth your truth in those questions depending betweene us in part doth; now it is not sufficient simply to consult or aske (as it were) the Scriptures concerning them, but they must be examined and re-examined againe and againe, both solitary and in consort, they must bee put home to it, and urged, and pressed close together before they will speake their mind plainly in this case or deliver out any of this treasure, yea in many cases a man must be content to goe to one end of the Scripture to know what they meane in the other, yea (that which is much considerable, and I feare wants that which belongs to it) they may seeme to deliver many pleasing and plausible answers under the shadow whereof the judgements and consciences of men be much refreshed for a season, so that they may be ready to shoute for joy, and congratulate themselves with his acclamation that said *εὐτυχός*, he had found, he had found, and yet none of these answers, neither be the *τὸ ζῆμιν*, the true direct and bottome meaning of them: As *Sampson* gave *Dalilah* answer upon answer to her question or demand, which pleased her for a time carrying a semblance of realtie and truth in them, but still her experiance discovered the insufficiency of them, and then she rejected them and would not give over till shee had the true answer indeed, *Judg. 16.*

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7.8. so doubtlesse the Scriptures may in many places (to our apprehensions) affirme many things, and deliver out many notions of choysse approbation to us for a time, the weakenesse and effects whereof notwithstanding farther time & experience and a clearer light may discover, yea there may from the same Scripture rise up many meanings and interpretations before us one after another, that may bee in our eyes as *Eliab Jesses eld, & some was in Samuels* (when hee was sent to annoyn one of his sonnes for King) surely (so he looking on *Eliab*) the Lords annointed, is before him, but he was yet a great way off from the Lords annointed there was *Eliab, Abinabas, and Shannusab*, and more then as many more presented before him, before *David* came in sight, who was the Lords annointed indeed, he was behind and a great way off in the field, and must be sent for before he comes: so the annointed sense and meaning of the Scriptures may yet bee farre off when we perswade our selves with the greatest confidence it is before us: And as he said of benefits, *Multa perdenda sunt ut seruas bene, A man must bestow many amiss, that he may bestow one well;* so many times a man must cast away many interpretations of Scripture, (and those sometimes such as otherwise he would not wittingly part with) that he may interpret at laist as he ought to doe. I make no question but you have had experience hereof in your selfe more then once, for my part I confess it hath beene a very frequent thing with me in the course of my studies and meditations, to meet with both from the pens or mouthes of others, and by mine owne conceptions also, some interpretations which have much affected me upon the first greeting, yea which for a time I have nourished in my bosome, and have treasure of, and yet afterward have apparently seene, that *et exaudiens ad reges* *C. 2.* my rejoicing was not good, and by a strong hand of superior conviction have beene compelled to call that darkenesse, and so to cast it from me which sometimes I called light, & kept close unto.

Wherfore I beseech you by the tender mercies of Jesus Christ, and by the glory of those many talents given unto you, the strength wherof, methinkes, should so worke, as to breakethrough a napkin and disdaine so weake and contemptible an inclosure, once more to survey with a single, unpartiall and disengaged eye, your present thoughts and apprehensions concerning these things which have removed you from off *an English Table*, and put you under *a Holland Busrell*. Confident I am that there is a light beyond your light in these matters, and which you are very capable of, if your eyes by your long slumber be

be not over heavy to open. I professe in the sight of God, & in as great singlenesse and simplicity of heart as ever man in this world spake word unto you, that I doe as clearly apprehend error and mistake throughout the greatest part of your way, as I doe in this conclusion, that twice two makes foure. The necessity of your *Covenant*, *Prolix confession of faith putting men to deliver their judgements in points of doubtfull disputation upon and before their admission into your Churche*; the power of the Keyes and of ordination of Pastors to be the right and inheritance of the whole body of the Congregation and of every member indifferently, and promiscuously, the divine institution or peremptory necessity of your ruling Elders, the necessity of widowes as Officers in the Church, the absolute necessity of one and the same government or discipline in all particulars whatsoever for all Churches, in all times and places, a full and peremptory determination of all things whatsoever appertaining to the worship of God, with divers such like positions (which are the very life, soule, and substance of your way) I am at perfect peace in my thoughts that you will never be able to demonstrate or prove from the Scriptures to any sober minded or considering man, I am loath to overcharge you with words or writings, To desire you to retурne and to repair the breach you have made upon us, I confess were a hard mention, and of slender hope to be obtained, were it not made to a truely great and noble spirit: and (*Ceteris paribus*) the request were more reasonable from you to me, and others with mee to goe over to you then, that wee should desire you to returne back unto us, because you have suffered already (at least in the thoughts of many) under the disparagement of some inconstancy, and equall it is when there is not some over-ruling reason to the contrary, that burdens should not be doubled, but rather divided. But herein I beseech you consider your advantage is the greater, you have by this meanes *πλειονα δυνατα, a greater and better sacrifice*, to offer upon the service of the truth and Gospell of Jesus Christ, then wee, if you can apprehend the truth with us, and deny your selfe the second time in comming over to us. And yet give me leave to say this unto you, though your restitution to us be one of the first borne of my joy in this worlds wishes, & the daytherof would be unto me above the dayes of the yeare, yet had I rather mourne over your absence still, then bring you hither any other wayes then by an Angell of light, I relish no satisfaction to any my requests from any, but what I purchase more by reasoning, then by requesting; and for your part I know that innovations

innovations of this nature, *a friend and a feather are alike, except reason make the difference,* I have made upon some words of encouragement from your mouth (related unto me by D.P.) and propound a Quere unto you concerning the head of your way, your Church Covenant, with some reasons hereof; If you be willing to treat with your old friend in a way of this commerce, I shall hereafter (God willing, as health and liberty agree) desire like satisfaction of you in some other particulars of your way, if the motion dislike you, neither have I any further pleasure in it, if you shall suspend your answer, give mee leave so farre to please my selfe, as to interpret your silence a ground of hope that your owne comming is not farre off; or otherwise if your answer bee too strong for me, and able to remove my mountaines out of my way, they are not Seas that shall keepe friends asunder any longer; I am yours (if you care to owne me) send mee over the silver and bright shining wings of truth, and upon these I come flying over to you out of hand, I would be as glad of a bargaine of truth at any rate whatsoever as another, God having taught me how to drowne the world in the least drop of the water of life: onely this I desire may be the Law of dispute betweene us, that since the strength of the confidence of your way is such as to breake out into a departure from us (and I conceive double light is required for separation in any kind, whereas single light sufficeth for any man continuing in his standing) you will goe to worke as a Prince and not as a begger, and command the truth which you hold and practise in opposition to us, by a high hand of pregnant and expresse Scriptures, and not beg any thing by any loose or faint interpretation or supposition; wee looke for letter for letter, word for word, and tittle for tittle, to the prooef of all you maintaine against us, and judge it somewhat hard to be forsaken in such a manner, onely because our logique is more dull and lesse piercing then yours; I have used the more libertie of speech unto you because I know you are able to heare it, and pity it is but a good paire of shoulders should now and then bee ballanced. The nightie God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ teach us how to make something out of nothing, and by the use of a miserable distracted and broken world, how we may compasse and fetch in the dayes of Eternitie; Grace, Peace, and Truth be multiplied unto you and yours, from the great fountaine of these heavenly treasures.

*Tours in the Lord for the greatest services
of Christian love and acquaintance.*

J.G.

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